

ALBERTSON PARKWAY Positive Changes



CASE STUDY

Albertson Parkway is located in south San José. The 0.5 mile trail travels beneath power lines and links to Santa Teresa County Park. In the 1980's the City Council had named the site in honor of a community activist and installed a narrow band of asphalt and bollards at all entry points to limit trespassing by motorized vehicles.

Utility corridors are often neglected, single-purpose spaces. But their linear character can make them suitable and desirable

spaces for trail development and community open space.

Project Scope

The former asphalt pathway was replaced with a meandering 12' wide trail, significant landscaping, three interpretive signs and other improvements.

Visual Impact

The flowering trees, roses and lush grasses coupled with a more accessible trail significantly improve the visual impact of the corridor.

Positive Changes

USAGE

Site visits conducted before and after project installation suggest that trail has become much more popular. During three visits in August 2009, numerous persons were seen walking or biking along the trail. Approximately 50 people attended the project's grand opening in late August 2009.

ADJACENT PROPERTIES

Solid fencing borders the parkway. During construction, one homeowner replaced low (about 5') and deteriorating fencing with a 6' high fence with latticed detail. The homeowner added an access gate from the private yard leading to the parkway. The work indicated a desire for privacy but also an interest in enjoying the parkway.

Nearby, another existing fence was painted; demonstrating pride of ownership and improving the appearance of the parkway.





Neighbors improve their fences

NEIGHBOR PERCEPTIONS

At an initial design meeting with the community, residents complained about existing conditions. The site's blighted and neglected appearance, and illegal cut-through vehicular and motorcycle traffic made attendees believe that not much could be improved.

The under-developed site had become a venue for undesirable activity. Residents reported drug use, loud music and dumping. The design did not include benches to discourage loitering. At the time, the community felt strongly that the space should only serve a transitory purpose.

With development of the trail and landscaping, Albertson Parkway has now become a popular walking route for residents. Residents attribute positive changes due to the project.

"There are people of all ages using it at all times of the day. It is nice to see that they are also picking up

after themselves. When it was just a weed-filled field, people used it as a trash dump. Yesterday I was walking and saw a pile of trash, I was going to pick it up on my way back, when I got back to that spot, it was already gone."

"It has definitely enhanced the aesthetics of our neighborhood. I actually enjoy looking down our street now. I also notice so many more families out and about using the trails--walking with strollers, dogs; jogging, riding bikes. The new parkway has created a neighborly atmosphere as well. People smile and say hello to each other as they pass by."



Project Components



Bio-swales

Storm water runs into grassy basins where they percolate into the groundwater supply, thereby reducing flows to the storm sewer system, area waterways and the Bay.

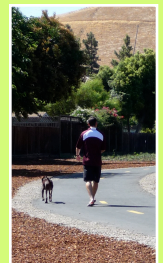
History and Science

Three interpretive signs speak of Mr. Gary Albertson's legacy and mission to improve public safety, Rancho Santa Teresa and design and function of the project's bio-swales.



Paved Trail

The new trail meets current standards and is sufficiently wide to accommodate walkers, bicyclists, skaters and joggers.



Plantings

A diverse mix of flowering trees and other plant material add color and interest.

